

**Appropriations Committee
February 25, 2015
Department of Transportation Budget Public Hearing**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Jonathan Herzig and I am a Transportation Engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and have worked for DOT for almost 3 years. Currently I am responsible for inspecting and administering DOT projects and coordinating with designers, contractors, utilities and local and state officials on these projects. It is important to realize and understand the pros and cons of dealing with and doing business with consultants that are brought in to administer similar construction projects.

I have been given the opportunity to work on one of the most complex bridge projects in the state, The Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge in New Haven or the "Q" Bridge. This job was staffed with consultants and overseen by State Employees. Through my several months of observing a project of this size, it became evident almost immediately that the consulting agencies were overstaffing this project. It appeared that there was a consultant engineer for almost every aspect task of the job. The jobsite itself was swarmed with consultant inspectors. At first, I thought this was a great thing, extra experience and eyes on everything. I soon realized that this was just an overstaffing strategy for the firms to make more profits.

It is apparent that consultants bill the Department of Transportation on an hourly basis for each individual employee. Therefore, for every extra person that cannot multi-task, the state is paying good money for their time. The mark-up on a consultant engineer vs. a state employee engineer is 30-40% more. This is not right. In addition, to the financial aspect of this issue, consultants do not have the same passion as state employees. We, the employees of the state of Connecticut, strive for the best, because ultimately we have to deal with any repercussions. If consultants do not administer and final a job out correctly, the state employees have to fix these issues and reconcile the problems. There were a lot of instances where consultants were consulting me, a three year employee with little to no experience on a job of this magnitude. Shouldn't these consultants have the knowledge if they are being paid to work on these multi-billion dollar jobs?

Consultants are important for complex and specialized inspections on extensive projects, but are slowly taking the state employees jobs and responsibilities. They are doing more work than we are doing in house, and at a visible premium. Due to short staffing in the state agency, we are forced to use these individuals more and more. The money is being thrown away and wasted.

The committee needs to address the issues regarding consultant use on state projects. It is evident that the department staff members need to be recognized for their skills and expertise that they were hired for and need to be given opportunities for training and career advancement. By putting the major responsibilities back in the departments' hands, the state is insuring that the overall infrastructure for the future is safe and managed by experienced and qualified individuals.

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